

The temple at Chichen Itza



The Maya



Timeline

1100 B.C.	800 B.C.	400 B.C.	300 B.C.	100 B.C.	600	800	900	1502
The first hunter-gatherers settle on the pacific coast	Village farming and trade become established	First solar calendars invented	Cities become centres for trade and Kings begin to rule	First pyramids are built	Cities start expanding quickly	Building of stepped pyramid of Chichen-Itza	Decline of Maya cities	First contact with Europeans is made

Key Vocabulary

agriculture	Farming – growing crops and rearing animals.
calendar	A system used to divide up and organise events in time.
civilisation	Human society which is organised. The society, culture and way of life of a particular area.
crops	A plant that is grown on a large scale – usually cereal, fruit or vegetable. The staple food of the Maya was maize, which was so important that they even had a maize god.
hierarchy	A system in which members of an organisation or society are ranked in an order.
hieroglyphs	They used about 800 symbols to create writing, often on folded pages forming a book (codex).
Base 20	Using a base 20 system (we use base 10), they used dots and bars to create numbers and had a symbol for zero.
sacrifice	The act of slaughtering an animal or a human as an offering to a god. The Maya often used human blood, but there is little evidence to suggest human sacrifice.
trade	Buying and selling goods.

Civilisation

- Maya society was based in an area called the Yucatán Peninsular in what is known as Mesoamerica.
- The Maya empire was organised into city states; each city state was ruled by a different noble family.
- Maya people lived in settlements with a centre temple/pyramid as a focal point.
- Maya city states traded with each other – often using cacao beans as money.
- The City of Tikal is a complex of Mayan ruins deep in the rainforests of northern Guatemala. Historians believe that the more than 3,000 structures on the site are the remains of a Mayan city called Yax Mutal.

Religion

- Maya temples were stepped to create a route to the heavens.
- The Maya religion was polytheistic (more than one god). Each god was associated with different areas of life.
- The Maya used blood as an offering to their gods. However, there is very little evidence to suggest human sacrifice.

The Mayans tied boards to their babies' heads to produce a flat forehead. They also tried to make their babies cross-eyed! Big noses were also considered beautiful.

Food

- The Maya produced maize as their main crop.
- The Maya people discovered the cacao plant – hot chocolate was a sacred drink for the Maya.
- The Maya ate pozole – a type of stew.

Culture

- Music and art were important to the Maya.
- Each settlement had a wide-open plaza area used as a central meeting point to play games such as pok-a-tok.
- The Maya used hieroglyphs to inscribe in stone slabs (called stelae) and in books (called codices).
- The Maya observed the movement of the sun, moon and stars to create calendars.
- The Maya created a logical and advanced number system.
- Masks were created for many purposes, but mainly funerals to protect important people in the afterlife.

Books

From A Bean To A Bar, Fair Trade Explored, Rain Player

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zq6svcw>

<https://www.mayaarchaeologist.co.uk/>

https://www.ducksters.com/history/aztec_maya_inca.php